



Smart Beginnings Virginia Peninsula

# 2021 Annual Impact Report



“ Smart Beginnings is committed to improving school readiness outcomes by addressing disparities and leading for equity so that all children have access to the health and education they deserve. Even before the pandemic, our work supported young children on the Greater Peninsula, regardless of zip code or socioeconomic status. If anything, the pandemic has shed an even brighter light on the great importance of our mission. ”

**Diane Umstead**  
Executive Director

90%

of a child's brain growth happens before kindergarten

## Every child. Every neighborhood. Ready.

Smart Beginnings Virginia Peninsula champions a bold community-wide vision that all Peninsula children will start school prepared and healthy.

However, many young children in our area face challenges that threaten their healthy development and learning. In the Virginia Peninsula Region, there are **32,300 children** (under age 5) with **24% living in poverty** in Hampton and Newport News.

In addition, **65% of the individuals** SBVP worked with this year live at or below **300% of the Federal Poverty level**.

*“As a Human Services professional and mother of a two-year-old, I know firsthand why early childhood care and education is valuable for a child's school readiness. When a family has the tools they need for healthy child development and learning, their child starts ahead and stays ahead. Smart Beginnings Virginia Peninsula connects parents, child care providers and early educators with resources they need to succeed and thrive in the Hampton Roads of tomorrow.”*

**Chenequa Hayden**

Board Chairwoman of Smart Beginnings Virginia Peninsula

## How We Work...

to support young children and their families in the region

### Better Outcomes For Children



#### Equitable Access

To improve school readiness, all children must have access to opportunities in schools, centers, and homes that provide the care and education they need regardless of age, income, ethnicity, race, zip code, or ability.

#### Impact

SBVP helped 8,036 children



#### Engaged Families

Families should be engaged in guiding the policies and practices of early childhood programs, and elected officials are accountable to families and welcome their involvement.

#### Impact

SBVP helped 2,534 families



#### High Quality

Children must be supported in their development and learning in safe, nurturing, age-appropriate, culturally sensitive environments, by a skilled workforce paid adequate wages and receiving professional support.

#### Impact

SBVP helped 1,617 teachers

### SBVP Serves As A Backbone

Coordinating, monitoring, and inspiring innovation to build the Early Childhood System through collaborative strategic planning, data-driven decision making, sustainable funding, and policy change using a collective impact approach.



## Increasing Family Stability Through Child Care Scholarships

For LJ, a seven-year-old boy, much of this summer was spent playing with friends in a youth program, on a playground at BC Charles Elementary School in Newport News.

A scholarship fund from Smart Beginnings' Emergency School-Age Child Care Initiative was one way to support more equitable access for children like LJ, to safe learning spaces during the pandemic.

"We have had financial difficulties, like many families" says LJ's mom, Tiffany Harris, who is an office manager and notary public and works with the youth program for the city of Newport News. "My husband stayed home with LJ so he could do hybrid learning. I wasn't planning on putting him in the program – money is tight, and he could stay home with his dad, who is self-employed. But when the scholarship opportunity came about and I found out I could apply, it was a blessing."

LJ participated this year in the eight-week summer youth program at BC Charles Elementary School. The program ran from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and served children from three years old through eighth grade. Thirty-four children were in the program, and kids were divided into groups of ten.

Scholarships reached 110 families with a range of single monthly awards from \$50 to \$1260 based on family income information and need.

Harris shares a personal story about the importance of appropriate care for children. She had a stepson who had asthma and passed away in 2011 on his 9th birthday. Her son also has asthma. She says her son has been healthy in the program and that staff "are following all the CDC guidelines."

"My son has had an opportunity to have fun, learn, go on field trips, and make friends. He never wants to miss the outdoor playtime. He loves the program – and we wouldn't have been able to afford it without the scholarship. My son is having a ball in the program, and he'll carry these memories with him when he's an adult."

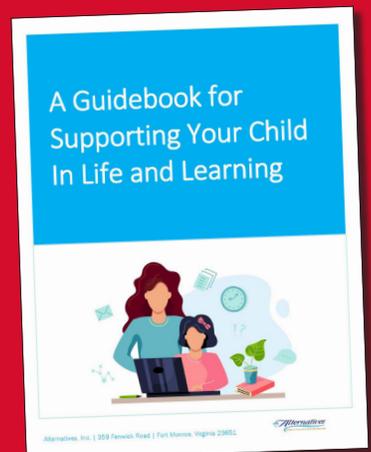
Harris found out about the program through Casey Jenkins, Superintendent of Youth Programs in Newport News. "When Smart Beginnings contacted us about the emergency school age initiative, we knew it was very important to get families into youth programs," says Jenkins. "This scholarship helped make it possible for families to do that."

**“ We wouldn't have been able to afford it without the scholarship. My son is having a ball in the program, and he'll carry these memories with him when he's an adult. ”**

"Child care is always critical – not only for families, but so people can work and serve their community," says Jenkins. "During the pandemic, we also served the children of many first responders."

Meanwhile, Harris emphasizes how much this scholarship and network made a difference to her family. "Parents are really struggling. During the pandemic, many parents had to go to work – not every parent can stop working or work at home. Parents need a program like the one my son was able to go to because of this scholarship."

With partners, we created a **Guide to Life and Learning** to provide tips and resources for parents and teachers in the age of virtual learning. You can download it from the home page of our website.



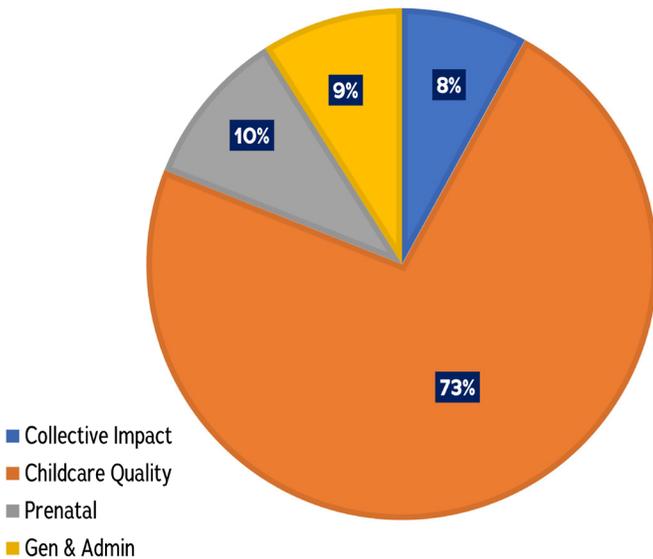
# Our Commitment

SBVP is a regional school readiness coalition that partners with 9 cities/towns and counties on the Greater Peninsula. SBVP is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of 21 volunteers who seek to understand the unique needs of children and families living in these communities. Multiple committees and community-led groups work with SBVP to align programming and

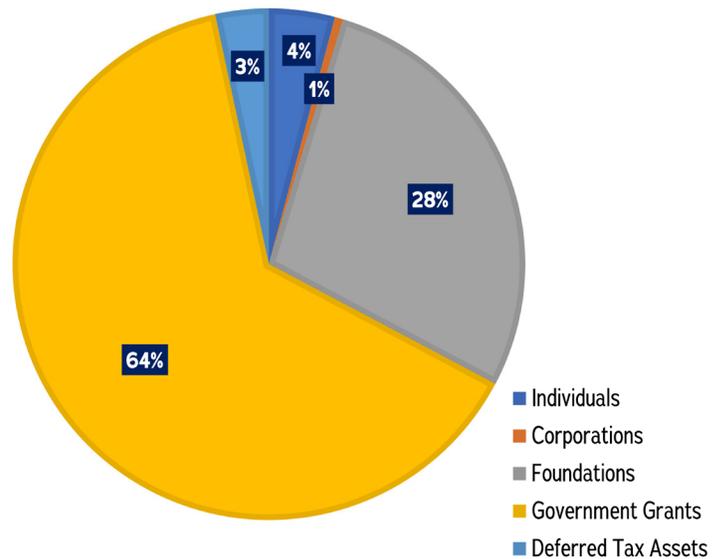
propose innovative strategies that support the healthy development and early learning of young children birth to age 5. SBVP is committed to improving school readiness outcomes by addressing disparities and leading for equity, so that all children have access to opportunities regardless of race, ethnicity, family income, language, ability, geography, or zip code.

## Financial Stewardship 2021

### Program Expenditures



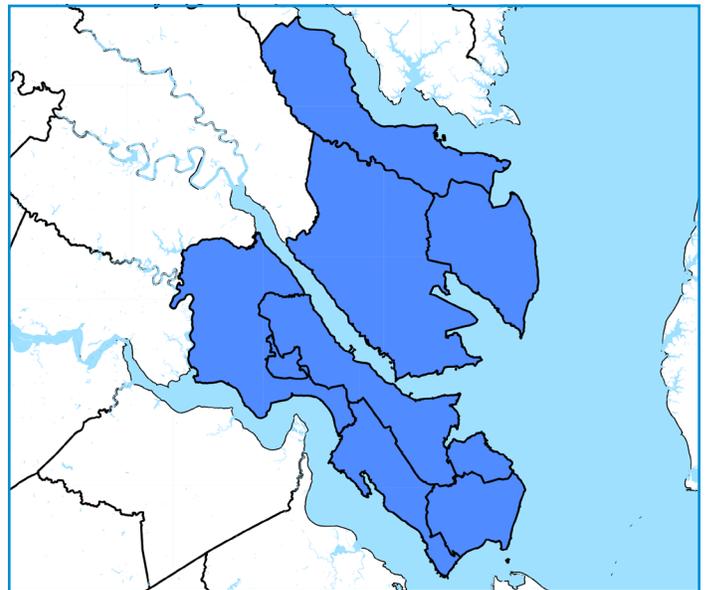
### Program Income



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Learn more at:  
[smartbeginningsvp.org](http://smartbeginningsvp.org)  
 (757) 240-2731 • [info@smartbeginningsvp.org](mailto:info@smartbeginningsvp.org)

**Serving Hampton and Newport News**, with some services also covering York County, Poquoson, Williamsburg/James City County, Gloucester, Mathews, and Middlesex, Virginia.